Rome-Westernville Road Bridge
(Golf Course Road Bridge)
Golf Course Road, 400 feet west of Route 46,
spanning the Mohawk River
Rome
Oneida County
New York

HAER No. NY-179

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PHOTOGRAPHS
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

ROME-WESTERNVILLE ROAD BRIDGE (GOLF COURSE ROAD BRIDGE)
HAER No. NY-179

Location: Golf Course Road, approximately 400 feet west of Route 46 (Rome-Westernville Road), spanning the Mohawk River, five miles north of the center of the City of Rome, Oneida County, New York. Bridge is approximately 700 feet downstream [south] from the Delta Dam and the now abandoned Black River Canal aqueduct crossing the Mohawk River.

UTM: N 4791030
E 465080
New York State Quad: Westernville

Date of Construction: 1884

Style: High Pratt truss

Engineer/ Builder: Specifications prepared by Rome City Engineer George C. Schillner. Bridge fabricated and erected by the Wrought Iron Bridge Company, Canton, Ohio.

Present Owner: City of Rome, New York.

Present Use and Condition: Bridge lacks recent painting. Approximately fifty percent of surface area suffers from surface corrosion, according to a 1986 inspection report from the New York State Department of Transportation. Bridge used as highway crossing of the Mohawk River. Bridge has a three ton load limit and is scheduled for replacement by a new bridge on a new alignment immediately upstream.

Significance: The Golf Course Road bridge is a relatively unmodified example of a late nineteenth century through Pratt truss highway bridge. Together with the adjacent reinforced concrete canal aqueduct this site contains two intact examples of pre-twentieth century transportation system structures.

Materials of Construction: The following specifications for the Golf Course Road bridge are the original construction specifications contained in the "Notice to Contractors" prepared by City Engineer George C. Schillner, July 1884:

An iron bridge crossing the Mohawk River near Hurlbuts according to the following specifications:

Bridge to consist of one span, iron truss, 103 feet in the clear between abutments, with one roadway 14 feet in the clear.

Capacity of the bridge to be 80 pounds per square foot of floor surface, exclusive of its own weight.

Straining iron not to exceed 10,000 pounds in tension, 9,000 pounds per square inch in Gordon's formula for compression, and 7,000 pounds in shearing. The best quality of American refined iron to be used.

Bridge to be pin connection, trusses not to exceed 16 feet from center of pin to pin in height and to have eight panels.

Top chords and end posts to consist of plate and channel bars securely riveted together.

Intermediate posts to consist of two (2) channels each latticed. All rivets must be upset and finished while red hot, and both heads must be centrally over the shank. The entire structure to be composed of wrought iron except the flooring.

The floor beams to be a 'rolled beam' securely fastened to the intermediate posts.

Floor joists to be hemlock, 9 joists to the panel. Floor plank to be hemlock 3 inches thick from 6 to 8 inches wide securely spiked to the joists. Wheel guards of hard wood to be placed on each side of the roadway securely fastened with bolts or screws.

All timber and plank to be free from sap, knots or shakes that will weaken them in any way.

All inside surface of iron work to have one coat of iron-clad paint mixed with good boiled linseed oil before riveting together, and all exposed surface of iron work to have one coat of said paint at the shop and a second coat after the erection of the bridge.

All wood work requiring painting to have two coats of paint.

The entire work and material to be subject to the approval of the Highway Committee and Commissioners and under the direction of the Engineer.

In addition to the above specifications, plans and strain sheets are on file at the city Chamberlain's office.

Dimensions: Single span, eight panel, through Pratt truss bridge 106 feet long. Bridge has an out-to-out width of 14 feet and a curb-to-curb width of 12 feet with a deck area of 1,500 square feet. Truss panels are 16 feet high and 12 feet 6 inches center-to-center. Bridge affords a horizontal clearance across the Mohawk River of 99 feet. Bottom chord of bridge is approximately 28 to 30 feet above the bed of the river. Vertical clearance above roadway is 12 feet 6 inches. Bridge is carried on concrete abutments 26 feet high.

Significant Exterior Features: Plate at center of portal bracing reads:

W. S. Wylie
J. D. Corcoran - Highway Commissioners
J. F. Williams
Geo. C. Schillner, City Engineer

Major Alterations and Additions: Bridge was raised 12 feet and moved approximately 30 feet downstream from its original location in 1910 when the Delta Dam was constructed and the Black River Canal locks and aqueduct were rebuilt and relocated. Bridge was removed from its original stone abutments and placed upon concrete abutments with wingwalls. Some portions of the original stone abutments serve as wingwalls for the concrete abutments. Original 4 inch by 14 inch hemlock floor stringers replaced by 15 foot long rolled steel I-beams, nine beams per bay. Timber plank floor replaced by open steel grate deck in 1958.

Project Information: The documentation of the Rome-Westernville Road Bridge was prepared by the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), National Park Service, during the summer of 1987 for the New York State Historic Bridges Recording Project. This project was sponsored by the New York State Department of Transportation and under the supervision of Eric DeLony, Chief and Principal Architect, HAER. This report was written by Andrew Cole and Charles Scott. When citing this report, please credit the Historic American Engineering Record and the authors.

Bridge specifications were advertised during June 1884 and modified and re-advertised during July 1884. The construction contract was awarded to the Wrought Iron Bridge Company of Canton, Ohio on July 23, 1884. With a bid of $1,600, the Wrought Iron Bridge Company offered the lowest bid of four competitors: Penn Bridge Company, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania; King Iron Bridge Company; and Fort Edward Bridge Company, Fort Edward, New York. The Wrought Iron Bridge Company was represented in the Rome bidding by agent V. Palmer of Richfield Springs, New York.

George C. Schillner, who prepared the specifications, was the Rome city engineer between 1878 and 1891. He listed his occupation in the Rome City Directory as "Civil Engineer and Surveyor," and, after his retirement from the city government, as "Civil Engineer and Architect." Schillner was later employed by the New York State Barge Canal to supervise the preparation of detailed maps [the "Schillner Maps"] delineating all lands acquired by the State of New York for canal navigation up to 1896.

The bridge was moved and raised as part of New York State Barge Canal Contract 55. Contract 55 was awarded to Arthur McMullen, New York, N. Y. on October 19, 1908 and involved the relocation of 1.9 miles of the Black River Canal and the rebuilding of four locks, the building of a reinforced concrete aqueduct over the Mohawk River, the construction of the Delta Dam and reservoir, and the relocation of the iron truss bridge. Excavation for and construction of the concrete abutments began in August 1911 and continued into October. The bridge was moved downstream 30 feet, raised 12 feet, and placed on new concrete abutments during November and the eastern approach road completed in December. Contract 55 was declared completed in August 1912.

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